A Commitment by Built Environment Professions in the Commonwealth to Support Sustainable Urban Growth

Recent research by a number of Commonwealth associations has revealed a severe shortage of built environment professionals, including town planners, architects and engineers across the Commonwealth with the shortage being most acute in many Commonwealth countries which are urbanising most rapidly and are among the most vulnerable. The surveys (1) also identified a lack of education and institutional capacity together with a weakness in built environment policy in several Commonwealth countries.

At a recent meeting in the London, The Rt Hon Patricia Scotland QC, Secretary-General of the Commonwealth, recognised that ‘Cities are one of the drivers of economic growth’ and acknowledged the challenges posed by rapid urbanisation and the need to build capacity, strengthen built environment policy and develop approaches which are of practical use by communities and city leaders throughout the Commonwealth. In order to address these issues, the Commonwealth Association of Planners, the Commonwealth Association of Architects, and the Commonwealth Engineers Council undertake to collaborate with one another to help build capacity amongst the built environment professions throughout the Commonwealth.

Our Commitment

We the signatories to this statement commit to undertake the following over the next 3 years:

1. Build an evidence base on the state of built environment professions. This commitment will identify the:
   - Number and distribution of qualified professionals and those in education and training
   - Skills profile of professionals including relevance to skills needed to deliver on SDGs
   - Number and distribution of training and education programmes including availability of continuing professional development
   - Presence of professional bodies to set professional standards and support ethical practices.
   - Availability of professional bodies and networks to share experience, knowledge and best practice
   - Relevance of education and training curricula to requirements to deliver the SDGs
   - Location and scale of capacity shortages and gaps in availability of professionals both now and forecast having regard to pace of urbanisation, impacts of climate change and natural disasters, scale and speed of migration and displacement, size and economic strength of nation and availability of education and training. Particular regard will be given to small island developing states, countries affected by protracted crises and cities at high risk.

2. Develop improved ways to increase capacity of built environment professions including in the long term and during crisis periods. This commitment will include:
   - Curricula development, education, training, CPD
   - Developing the role of professional bodies
   - Working with other constituencies in the Global Alliance for Urban Crises to develop initiatives to help surge capacity during crises and better prepare the built environment professions for their active role in prevention and response
3. **Develop effective resilient planning approaches** to address the pace of urban growth, the increasing prevalence of urban poverty and the challenges posed by climate change and natural disasters particularly including small island developing states and other vulnerable locations where resources may be limited. This commitment will include:

- Dissemination of good practice approaches including promotion of the rapid urbanisation toolkit being developed by the Prince’s Foundation
- Development of internet platforms and other method to share knowledge and good practice

4. Identify **fundamental principles for effective governance, legislation and regulation** of cities and urban areas. This commitment will include:

- Review of effectiveness and relevance of existing practice
- Identification of fundamental principles
- Dissemination of good and best practice

**Note**

1. [https://issuu.com/comarchitect.org/docs/caa_survey_of_the_architectural_pro](https://issuu.com/comarchitect.org/docs/caa_survey_of_the_architectural_pro), [https://www.commonwealth-planners.org/planning-for-rapid-urbanisation](https://www.commonwealth-planners.org/planning-for-rapid-urbanisation)

**Signed by:** the Presidents of the Commonwealth Association of Planners, the Commonwealth Association of Architects and the Commonwealth Engineers Council.

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